



## ● Colorado River Management Report

### Summary

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This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month of May 2022.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### Actions to Protect Lake Powell Elevation

On May 4, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) announced two actions to protect power generation and the outlet infrastructure at Lake Powell, assuring that more water will flow into the lake from upstream reservoirs and less water will be released downstream by providing that:

- 500,000 acre-feet of additional water will be released from Flaming Gorge Reservoir, located approximately 455 river miles upstream of Lake Powell; and
- 480,000 acre-feet will be left in Lake Powell by reducing Glen Canyon Dam's annual release volume from 7.48 million acre-feet to 7.0 million acre-feet in water year 2022.

These actions were taken to reduce the likelihood of Lake Powell falling below elevation 3,490 feet, which is the minimum power pool at Glen Canyon Dam. Getting below that elevation could damage dam infrastructure, would interrupt hydropower generation, and interrupt the water supply of two communities near Lake Powell. Modeling shows that these actions will significantly reduce the risk of Lake Powell declining below elevation 3,490 feet in the next two years. To ensure that these actions have minimal impact to the Lower Basin States, including Metropolitan, through 2026 Reclamation will add 480,000 acre-feet of water to the actual level of Lake Mead when making tier determinations for shortages and Drought Contingency Plan contributions. For Metropolitan, that means that instead of making contributions when Lake Mead is below 1,045 feet, it will be required to make those contributions when Lake Mead is below about elevation 1,038 feet. (At this elevation, 480,000 acre-feet is equal to about 7 feet in Lake Mead.)

#### Reclamation to Restart Salinity Control Well in Paradox Valley

At the May Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum meeting, Reclamation informed the Forum that it plans to resume operations of the well in Paradox Valley at about 2/3 of its operating capacity as part of a six-month test. During this test period, Reclamation will monitor seismic conditions in the region and be prepared to halt the test operation if earthquakes in the area resume. The operation will capture about 65,000 tons of salt per year and inject it 2-3 miles below the Paradox Valley where it cannot interact with the Colorado River. At the conclusion of the six-month period, the well will be turned off and Reclamation will evaluate the conditions observed and determine if the well can be operated safely for a prolonged period.

#### Reclamation issues 2021 Water Accounting Report

On May 15, Reclamation issued its annual Water Accounting Report, that details the Colorado River accounting actions for the prior year. A copy of the report can be found [here](#). The report highlights Metropolitan's water management programs, its exchange programs with San Diego County Water Authority and San Luis Rey Native American Tribe, and Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) activities. In 2021, Metropolitan took delivery of about 19,000 acre-feet of ICS water, leaving a balance of 1.274 million acre-feet in Lake Mead.

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### **Navajo Nation Signs Water Rights Settlement with Utah and the United States**

In May 2022, Navajo Nation leaders signed a funding agreement with the United States and Utah. The funding obligation arises out of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act (Act). Enacted in 2020, the Act ratified the settlement agreement between the parties. The settlement quantifies the Navajo Nation's water rights, including 81,500 acre-feet of water from the Colorado River in Utah. The settlement agreement also allows the Navajo to lease unused water to entities on or off the reservation and guarantees they will not lose water rights not put to use. The settlement agreement resolved the Navajo Nation's long-standing claim to a share of water in Utah.

As part of the funding agreement, the federal government will pay the Navajo Nation approximately \$210 million for drinking water infrastructure in San Juan County — the part of the 27,000-square-mile reservation that lies, in part, in Utah. This settlement is one of 16 tribal water rights settlements that the Biden administration is devoting \$1.7 billion to fund from the recently enacted federal infrastructure bill.

The United States also represents the Navajo Nation in the on-going adjudication of the Little Colorado River in Arizona, and with the implementation of the Navajo Nation San Juan Basin in New Mexico Water Rights Settlement Agreement of 2010.